

Catch a Bay Critter Lesson Plan

Activity:

“Today we are going to wade in the Bay to catch critters! What kinds of animals do you think live in the Bay?” Discuss.

- Introduce rules and guidelines before crossing the boardwalk
 - Walk in a single-file line along the boardwalk slowly and carefully
 - Carry nets vertically
 - Keep shoes on feet
 - Only go into the water up to their thighs – not a swimming activity.
 - Use wet hands when handling animals.
 - Walk when on the beach
- Students and Chaperones carry equipment to the beach if not already there. Stop once you reach the beach for further instruction.
 - Point out the Tidal Pool and the Bay. Predict where they might catch more critters. Give suggestions, but do not correct students’ predictions. If they are not on the right track at this point, they will discover the right answer as they explore the Tidal Pool and Bay.
 - Model the appropriate use of dip nets and seine nets. Chaperones are to monitor all areas.
 - Recall the use of the wet hand rule. Catch critters and place in collection tubs. They may pick up, but try to keep in water as much as possible.
 - When they hear the whistle, they are to stop the activity and gather around the collection tubs to wait for further instructions.
- Fill the collection tubs with bay water and place them on the beach area. Monitor and assist with critter collection and handling. Students put the critters in the correct buckets (labeled “Bay” and “Tidal Pool”).
- After 20 minutes, blow the whistle and gather the students around the collection buckets for directions.
- Divide the students into groups around each bucket. Students will work in their group to identify as many of the critters as possible, using the identification cards.
- Gather students together again and discuss findings. Discuss the importance of monitoring this area (environmental indicators). Have a chaperone or teacher complete the “Scientific Collection Data Sheet” as students discuss findings.

Summarize: *What makes this habitat so important? What can you do to help keep this resource healthy and safe?* Discuss the importance of putting the critters back in their habitat. Choose volunteers to empty contents of the collection buckets back in the Tidal Pool or Bay. If you are the final group of the day, students will carry equipment back across the boardwalk. If another group is to follow, neatly leave equipment on the beach.